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General Assembly
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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 6 April 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I am compelled to write to you once again, in the light of Israel's crimes today against peaceful Palestinian demonstrators, killing, so far, 8 civilians and injuring more than 1,000, including through the widespread use of live ammunition. This brings the number of demonstrators killed in Gaza since the "Great March of Return" began last Friday to 27 and the number of wounded throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory to more than 2,500.

The names of those killed today are Alaa el-Din Yahya el-Zamili, 17, Majdi Ramadan Shabat, 38, Hussein Mohammad Madhi, 16, Osama Khamees Qadiyeh, 38, Ibrahim al-Qurr, 20, Sidqi Faraj Abu Outawi, 45, Sobhi Abu Outawi, 20, and Mohammad Said Musa al-Haj Saleh, 33. Thaer Mohammed Rabaa, 30, succumbed to the wounds he sustained last week.

We reiterate that the "Great Return March" is a peaceful protest against dispossession and displacement, occupation and blockade.

As stated by the spokesperson for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Liz Throssell: "Given the large number of injuries and deaths, the ominous statements made by Israeli authorities in the days leading up to the protest, as well as indications that the individuals killed or wounded were unarmed or did not pose a serious threat to well-protected security forces — and in some cases were actually running away from the [Green Line] fence — there are strong indications that security forces used excessive force." These elements combined provide strong evidence of Israel's premeditated decision to target civilians and resort to unlawful lethal force in utter contempt, yet again, for its obligations and the rules of international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and for basic humanity.

The events near the Gaza-Israel border are not "clashes" between two "sides"; they constitute a massacre of unarmed Palestinian civilians, all killed inside Gaza and within the "buffer zone" unlawfully imposed by Israel, which cuts into the Gaza Strip,

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by one of the most well-equipped armies in the world, and must be condemned in the strongest terms. They are the result of the structural impunity that Israel continues to enjoy for its grave violations and abuses of international law. It has become commonplace, indeed expected, that the killing of Palestinians is either ignored or, more frighteningly, applauded by Israeli officials. To Israel, Palestinian lives do not matter.

In this context, we welcome the statements made by the international community, including the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Governments, regional organizations and a number of international, Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations, which reaffirmed the right to peaceful protest and called for independent and transparent investigations into the killings by Israel of Palestinian civilians taking part in the peaceful protests. These calls need to be followed by due action to hold the perpetrators accountable and prevent the recurrence of such crimes and the loss of more innocent life. Moreover, the international community has the responsibility to act to ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Without such protection and an end to the occupation, Palestinians will continue paying the price — with their lives.

Regrettably, over the course of these tragic events, a voice has stood out in dissonance, making no mention of Palestinian victims and refusing to hold the occupying Power responsible for its own actions, further emboldening it to continue its reckless and deplorable crimes and its dehumanization of the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian people in Gaza, who suffer under an inhumane and illegal Israeli blockade and the impact of successive military aggressions and the ensuing tragic humanitarian crisis, chose peaceful protest in their struggle against the horrific situation they endure and to convey their hopes. Their calls cannot remain unanswered.

It is long overdue for the world to stand with principles and commitments affirmed time and time again and to demand an end to Israel's brutal military occupation of the Palestinian land and an end to its blatant disregard for the human rights of the Palestinian people. It is time for the Palestinian people to live as a free people in their own independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. It is time for the Palestinian people to realize their inalienable human rights and justice.

This letter is in follow-up to our 629 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432–S/2000/921) to 3 April 2018 (A/ES-10/774–S/2018/296), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of those war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations